

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ACTION

October 22, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT
FROM: CLINTON E. GRANGER *CE*
SUBJECT: Notification to Congress of FMS Case Over
\$25 million; Ethiopia

As you know, we have pending a notification to Congress of our intent to sell 16 F-5Es to Ethiopia. The matter is sensitive because Eritrean insurgents, who object to our arms supply to Ethiopia, hold four American hostages and might retaliate against them if the proposed F-5E sales become known.

In our memorandum to you of October 7 we pointed out that the danger to the hostages must be balanced against the severe strain to our relations with Ethiopia of any substantial delay of the F5 sale. Since then, the issue has been complicated by several new factors:

- Ambassador Hummel has pointed out that delay of notification to Congress beyond October 24 will make necessary renegotiation of the Letter of Offer, with consequent delay and possible serious Ethiopian reaction (cable attached).
- At Mr. Sisco direction, George Vest has notified Senators Clark and Case, and Congressmen Diggs and Fascell of our intentions to send notification forward on the classified basis. Their reaction was one of distaste but not outrage. All agreed, however, that there is substantial opposition in Congress to such a sale, and that the facts will leak to the press very quickly.
- We have now agreed in principle to direct (albeit limited) contacts with the insurgents to try and secure the release of the hostages. No date or place has yet been set for these contacts.

Subject to GDS of E.O. 11652.
Automatically declassified
December 31, 1981.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - GDS*HR 10/18/01*

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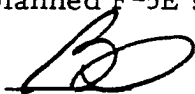
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Under the circumstances there are no good choices, but the best available seems to be support for State's proposal for confidential notification. We cannot rule out possible harm to the hostages if the sale becomes public knowledge through Congressional leaks; but their safety, even if we delay the sale, is not assured. What is certain is that delay of the sale for any reason will cause severe strains in our relations with the Ethiopians and strengthen the hands of the radical elements in the present regime. On balance, therefore, we recommend NSC concurrence in State's proposal to notify Congress on a confidential basis of the proposed sale.

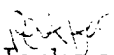
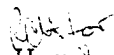
RECOMMENDATION

That you agree to our concurrence in State's proposal to notify Congress confidentially of the planned F-5E sale to Ethiopia.

Approve



Disapprove

 
Les Janka and Hal Horah concur.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - GDS

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